241
262 are no ready markets.

Sesame seed (Sesamum indicum) called "selit", is rather rare, and, as the name indicates, not originally native to Abyssinia. The Amhara, finding it difficult to grow, consider it an expensive and delicious delicacy, and consume the oil only as a rare treat.

Sunflower seed (Heliantus annuus), called "suf" is not a field crop, only occasionally planted, often semi-wild.

244 Vegetables are considered garden crops, and are planted near the hamlet on the hillside, while field crops are in the valley and river flood plains. Apart from kitchen gardens, which are considered necessities because of the spices that are consumed daily, other vegetables, particularly cabbage (goman) are despised as poor food (food of p poor people or in times of famine). Consequently the Amhara raises few vegetables and small quantities.

Cabbage (goman), and a white variety, "aydärgë", resistant to climatic change.

252 Chick-Peas, "shembera" (Cicer arietum), the most common, generally eaten roasted, but also boiled in the lenten season, and baked into bread to stretch tyeff in case of crop failure. Shembera is the proverbial staple, even in war and famine, never expected to fail. The proverb says:

244
539 "She who has not born, will never carry her load;

244
[539]

(but a fallow) shembera (field) will bear (next year)".

meaning that a barren woman will never carry a child in womb, but a shembera field will bear again and again. The Amhara realizes that this legume improves the soil. It will grow in poor soil, resist drought. The harvest is late, usually February.

Peas, called "atär" are also grown in quantity, for similar reasons: they grow well in poor soil, and are especially important in lent.

"meser" The collective term for lentils.

Broad bean, "bagella" also grows in poor and eroded soil, and is much planted. It is then roasted, or boiled, or mixed in curry (wot). [252]

Onions and garlic, the latter called "white onion" are grown in kitchen gardens as ingredients of wot.

Grey bean called "adängwarë", planted at beginning of heavy rains as fenced-in garden crop, eaten raw, considered semi-wild, and not prestige food.

Gourds, "qël", e.g. "dubba", pumpkin-type (Cucurbita maxima), are grown inside hamlets and boiled and cut into strips in wot (curry-type stew). Some gourds are planted in dug holes, others grow on vines to the height of roofs, on which they rest for support.

Roots, similar to potatoes, called "dennech" are grown in Shoa, but are of minor importance

423 It is still tremendously difficult to make an accu-
435 rate and reliable survey of "capital" and expenditures--due to concealment of property for fear of taxes. As for the value of their own land, this cannot even be estimated by observation, for not even the owners know the value of their own land. For fear of alienation, and possible higher taxes on land found to be more fertile than declared, they actually do not want to know. Most Amhara land is not even measured, and most have no clear titles, except by local "custom". The value of the tuqul hut cannot be estimated since it is not a cash item and utilizes only the raw products of nature. The same is true of utensils and equipment. Even the plowpoint is bartered rather than purchased.

C. Dietary habits

252
262 The diet in general is low in proteins and vitamins, but otherwise not inadequate.[64]

The mainstay of the Amhara is a round, thin, limp, slightly sour bread "enjara", made largely from tyeff grain. After the grain has been handground by the housewife, she mixes the flour with water and lets it stand about three days. Then she pours the thickish liquid on a clay plate (called "metad") about 2 feet in diameter, covers it with a high lid of tight reeds or clay which leaves much air space. The bread is thus baked for about four minutes on top of the triangular stone hearth. The result is a leavened, spongy-surfaced but flat-bottomed limp bread about 1/4 inch thick, and about 2 feet in diameter. The meat-curry is

64. Simmons, et al, Global Epidemiology, 1951. p.64.

252
242 poured over several layers of it; or spiced butter is smeared; or, especially in the fasting season or while travelling, condiments such as nug-paste or talba-paste are smeared. Variations in the preparation of enjara include some kneading during the fermentation process, adding some old enjara to aid in leavening, polishing the plate with oilcake of nug or talba to prevent sticking, using straw for the fire so heat will be spread evenly and uniformly.

Unleavened bread, "qitta", is baked mainly as a staple for travelling. The flour may be of other grains (e.g. wheat) or of a mixture of sorghum, barley, dagussa, even shembera. The flour is allowed to remain in water a maximum of 5 hours. If even less time, it is called "afla qitta", doubly unleavened. This bread is also baked when in great hurry to leave, as in warfare, and the Falashas believe that this was the "unleavaneda bread" baked by the ancient Israelites on their Exodus from Egypt.

Another travel mainstay, elaborate to prepare, is a soggy, but not liquid, mixture of enjära and wot meat-stew, called "fetfet". It is carried in a reed basket which has been covered by a finely tanned morocco skin.

Another type of bread, thicker, more consistent, and resembling European varieties, is collectively called "dabbo". It is baked only for rare occasions, such as religious feasts, e.g. "mäsqäl", the Feast of the Cross. Therefore, it is usually made from the luxury grain, wheat, and only the poor add barley or tyeff to stretch the wheat. The grain is first softened in water; then husked in a wodden mortar; then ground into fine flour. This is then knea-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

252
262 ded, with water, in a wooden bowl, "gäbätä". Various spices and condiments are added. The dough is left to rise at least 5 hours, and the metad plate is preheated. Leaves of "koba", or the large leaves of the "embush" plant are spread on the metad plate (preferable banana leaves when available). After the clay plate has been rubbed with "ket-keta" leaves (Dodonea viscosa), and the dough is evenly spread on the leaves, and covered with more leaves, a clay lid is sealed around the edges with mud. Wood from the hearth is now placed on top of the lid, until only glowing embers are left underneath. With a properly smoldering fire the dabbo can be baked in two hours; but for flavor the dabbo is left sealed for some hours more. The result is a massive bread, about 2 inches thick, 2 feet in diameter, with distinct crust, and very tasty. Only in the wealthier monasteries, where it is referred to as "dabyë" is it a daily staple. (e.g. in Däbra Libanos it is cut into four quarters, and each monk receives a specific number of quarters according to his rank) Variations of baking include pouring the dough in more liquid form, or baking the leaves filled with heavy dough in hot ashes rather than in the clay plates.

The second most common item of food is the "wot", a peppered spiced sauce which may or may not contain meat. Innumerable variations exist: this is usually the only dish in which the housewife has the opportunity to develop her own recipes, by adding certain spices, etc. Some of these spices are even imported from Yemen and are for sale at all major markets, even remote ones, although most spices

252 are raised in the housewife's kitchen garden. Every hus-
262 band of pride claims to be able to distinguish the wot of his wife. Among spices used are:

263 [278] Ethiopian spices, raised by Amhara:

"Tena Adam" (lit. health of Adam), very aromatic. Important medicine against buda spirit (evil eye).

This is Rue (Ruta graveolens, Ruta hortensis).

Fenugreek (Trigonella foenumgroccum), called "Abush"

Coriander (Coriandrum sativum), "dembelal". Cheaper than "bärbäre" and used to replace it.

Sweet Basil (Ocinum Basilicum), called "bäsobela" or "zäqa qebye"

Bärbäre, the all-important red peppery major garden crop.

Ginger, called "zendjebel". It is used unscraped.

[273] Caraway seed (Carum carvi) called "enselal", also used to make "araqi" intoxicant drink.

"Abusda", a dark seed resembling nug. Also called "tequr azmud".

Mustard seed, called "shenfa", ground to condiment.

Thyme, called "azmud", in light and dark varieties.

Wild Thyme, "tosen".

Garlic, called "näch shenkurt" (lit. white onion).

Spices used by Amhara, but bought on market, including those of Yemen importation:

Cardamon, called "korärima". (Elettaria paradise).

Saffron (Crocus sativus), called "erd", used to add golden orange color to reddish "wot".

Cumin (Cuminium cynisum), called "kamun".

263 "afär kochär" resembling nutmeg.

Capsicum (Cayenne pepper), possibly introduced by the Portuguese. Called "qundo bärbäre".

252 262 263 A number of these spices are pre-mixed, some added later to the wot. A mixture of bärbäre powder, a salt called "duddus", and garlic, called "awäze", is kept as a staple and also carried by travellers. Vegetables such as cabbage ("gomänzär") and pumpkin slices ("dubba)" are boiled in the "wät". Sesame seed ("sälit", Sesamum indicum) add purplish spots of oil content to the wot. Aroma is added by "senbul" (Spica celtica), expensive and therefore rare.

The most common wot is "qay wät". Chick-peas are pre-fried with red onion. Water, mashed red pepper ("delleh") and butter are added, stirred and heated. Finely sliced meat is then added, and black spice (tequr azmud) is sprayed over the boiling mixture. More water is added and stirring continues. . Some add a bit of barley beer, others pea flour.

When fresh beef is used on Sundays or at special feasts, the red pepper wot is called "zegen wot". The meat is lightly boiled, and minced; onions are minced and slowly roasted, and the whole is boiled with pre-roasted fenugreek spice, and with red barbare pepper. Then butter is added. When this is well cooked, and the host can afford it, the following spices are added: white azmud ("näch azmud"), black azmud (both thyme); ginger; sweet basil; cardamon seed. After cooking, capsicum is sprinkled over the settling stew, and other spices according to individual preference.

252 For the less well-to-do, the cheapest meat is chicken, and this red pepper stew is called "qäy-doro wät". Slaughtering, even of chicken, must be done by men. The pious pronounce the invocation, "In the name of the Father, the Son, the holy Ghost, one Divinity"(because of the Monophysite faith). Then the housewife takes over, removes the feathers in boiling water, singes the skin, inflates the outer skin by blowing into the cut skin near the throat. She then cleans the chicken and rubs it with pea flour. Inner organs and wings and legs are washed with salt and lemon juice, then lightly roasted. In another pan, minced red onion, red pepper and other spices are fired in butter, water is added and stirred, ground salt is powdered over it. Then boiled, shelled eggs are added. Now all chicken parts are boiled with this prepared mixture, in a deeper clay pot.

Whenever any of these vegetable or meat stews is boiled without red pepper, the stew is called "alecha", and, unless this dish is added to the menu for variety, it is considered a poor substitute. It is given to very young [758] infants and to persons with intestinal ailments, and so [576] constitutes a symbol for weakness. (It is a major insult to call a man "alecha", because the term also means "impotent".)

Most often alecha is boiled with chicken, "yädoro alecha". Red onion is preferred in butter, in a clay pot ("dest"). Peeled vegetables such as tomatoes (in urban areas) and water are added. The chicken, disjointed, washed and dried, is boiled in this. Powdered ginger, cloves, green pepper without seeds, sweet basil are added,

252 262 the last a few minutes before the wot is ready. Some add capsicum at the same time.

Liver and stomach, especially of sheep and goat, are eaten, but spleen and milt are considered hard to digest and are given to dogs. In general, interior organs are not prestigeful.

Raw beef, "brundo", is still featured at special feasts such as weddings, religious feasts like "täzkär", [64] as it was featured at feasts of warriors in the past. This brings much tapeworm infection, but the risk is taken because it is believed that "brundo" makes strong like no [755] other food. The painful purgative cure is undergone every two months with "kosso", still a major institution among the Amhara.

To cool the palate linings and tongue from the bärbärē, curdled milk, "ergo", is consumed right afterwards. [515] Hands are carefully washed, for touching the eyes with fingers stained from the spiced stew makes them smart.

Fish, much eaten only in the rainy season, is also boiled in wot, often after slight prefrying in talba (linseed oil); lentils (mesr) are often added.

Lentils become very important in the long lenten season and on every Wednesday and Friday, when the average [784] Amhara still abstains from meat, milk, eggs and other animal products, for religious (Coptic fast) reasons. The staple food during these periods is a porridge called "shero": mashed peas seasoned with spices, onion and vegetable oil.

Another vegetarian staple is "nefro", consisting of peas, chick peas, sorghum, all boiled and eaten as ker-

1: Messing E-5 (1953-1954)1957 MP5 Amhara MP5

252 262 nels, or crushed and baked into a cake with nug or linseed oil. The porridge of non-fast times is called "genfo". It is made of crushed wheat, barley, butter and curdled milk. In fast times nug and linseed are substituted for the forbidden butter and milk. A fast drink consists of tyeff flour boiled in salt water, called "hu".

[272]

Other religious food taboos include the pig, which is never raised, except for European's use. This taboo dates back to Judaism and the Old Testament.

Every householder usually has a supply of roasted kernels "qolo" available in case unexpected guests or kin come to visit, a frequent occurrence. The pattern of "qolo" is very similar to that of a linguistically equivalent concept in Yemen. The Amhara makes it mostly of barley, "gebs qolo", but also of shembera and of maize.

[263] Condiments taken along on trips include an oily paste made of nug or linseed. When this is also spiced, salted, or mixed with honey, it is called "chelqa". It [272] resembles a gummy porridge. The traveller can mix it with water and instantly have a drink which is regarded not only as thirst-quenching, but also as strength-giving. However, no one claims that the taste is good.

264 There are two major meals per day: midday lunch, a light meal, though it may feature both "enjara" and "wot"; and the heavier supper, "erut", the main meal consumed in the cool of the early evening around the hearth of the hut, with bread, meat stew, barley beer and condiments. Breakfast as such is not eaten, except for a handful of roasted barley, and, if the household can afford it, black coffee.

252 Butter is made in a large gourd ("gurna"), plugged with a wooden prop. The housewife shakes this back and forth, much like Middle Eastern nomads shake it in skins. The butter that results resembles Indian ghee, and is called, at this stage, "gorënna". For human consumption it is then usually boiled with spices, especially bërbërey, but not with salt. To cure it further in order to make it sweet, delay rancidity, etc., butter (qebyë) is further boiled with one or several of the following spices in the process known as "yäqoyë mantäriya", "yäqebyë anätatär":

263

bark of ginger	- quaräfa zenjebel
cardamon seeds	- korärima
thyme	- azmud
garlic	- näçh shenkurt
sweet basil	- bäsobela
saffron	- erd
wild thyme	- tosen

302 Since most of these spices are expensive, butter intended for ornamental pomade of women's hair is boiled instead with leaves of the "ades" bush, which grows wild. This process is "ades qermefad".

273 The most important, daily drink is tälla, the barley beer brewed by the housewife. It is little different, basically, from other African barley beers. Men almost never drink water (though the barley beer may be very weak), partly due to their fondness for "sweet", i.e. only slightly fermented beer. After three days of storage, the Amhara begin to complain that it is "too bitter", and let the women drink it up.

462 or will be described under "division of labor by sex".

462 The hardest daily work of the female is the pounding
252 and/or grinding of grain. Sorghum(mashella), barley, even shembera peas and pepper, are dehusked by pounding with an up-and-down motion in a hollow wooden tree-trunk, with a stout wooden pestle. After that, the grains are usually left overnight in water for softening. The next day they, as well as the common tyeff grain, are hand-ground on an inclined flat stone, by use of a smaller stone of different type, weighing as much as 4-5 kilos, with the same back-and-forth motion of ancient Egypt, rather than rotary. To produce flour for the entire family takes the better part of each day.

316 The woman carries water from the valley every morning,
462 sometimes several kilometers, in a heavy earthenware pot
[482] tied to her upper back. It weighs 20 kilos when full. Only during the 3-months rainy season can she use nearby brooks and temporary watercourses. This female task makes it possible to locate hamlets on or near hilltops, far from water in the dry season, but safe from flooding in the rainy season.

462 Kitchen duties of the female, besides cooking and
251 daily baking of "enjara" bread, includes also the processing of meat for later use. After slaughtering, done by men because of the religious significance of this duty from which women are excluded, she cuts the meat into thin strips, called "zelzel", dries them in the sun to leather-like toughness, then stores them in the hut for the next feast, for use in the stew called "zelzel wot". Food -

373 Little clay oil lamps are a luxury, since the fuel, often kerosene, must be bought at the market. Only churches and landowning farmers can afford it on occasion. In the church, beeswax candles, made by the women auxiliaries of the church from cotton thread and beeswax, serve for illumination at the early masses, and are surprisingly non-dripping.

372 Modern matches, made in Ethiopia under a government monopoly, are now cheaply available at all great markets, and have replaced earlier methods of making fire. The old method is still folowed in remote jungle areas such as Wolqait. There, fire is produced by friction, using a big, soft, bottom piece of "wanza" or "gerawa wood", and a branch or piece of hardwood, such as wild olive ("woyra") as the twirling or rubbing top piece. It sometimes takes an hour of effort. Even in the hamlets, where matches are available, they are saved by transporting fire from hearth to hearth in a broken potsherd (gel). Charcoal ("käsäl") is a luxury item, used sparingly only in pottery-making, occasionally to boil coffee if in a hurry or tea in urban places.

462 252 Baking is a female occupation, but becomes a source of income only in urban centers or temporarily at great markets, where restorateur-prostitutes engage in this work or hire less attractive women to do it for them. A woman who specializes in baking and selling "enjära" and other breads is called a "gagari". It is one of the very few money-producing occupations in which a Coptic Amhara woman can engage. But it is low prestige, and no self-respecting

462 252 554

462 pater familias, certainly not a feudal "great man" or offi-
252 cial will buy from her, and a lazy housewife, even an ur-
554 ban one, would be sharply criticized, even divorced, if she bought the product of the "gagari". For it is believed that her baking is carelessly done, that sand and dirt have not been picked out carefully before and during grinding, and the product is "fit only for Shanqalla" ex-slaves. One thin, round, two-foot pancake of "enjära" costs 5 Ethiopian cents (US$0.02); dabbo bread of course costs considerably more but customers are less frequent than for the daily "enjära" bread.

283 Spinning is the task of the housewife and of all wo-
462 men attached to a household, be it a hamlet kin group, or an all-female zar society (see chapter on spiritual healing). On her wedding day, the bride brings with her a small, ornamented reed basket, called "muday", in which she carries her own personal little distaff, some cotton thread on a reed bobbin that she has made, together with personal
885 ornaments and tattooing dyes. This symbolizes that she is ready for adult womanhood and marriage, though she may be only 13 or 14 years old.

Carding of the raw cotton is also done by women. They beat it, pick out the husks, then place the cotton balls on the string of a bow called "dägan", tense the string with a stick, then agitate the string with the neck cut off a gourd (called "qel angät"). This loosens the cotton so that it can be cleaned and completely dehusked.

Every afternoon the housewife takes up her spinning, unless some special task takes her time. The distaff "emmärt" consists of a round, solid reed or thin round

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

CAP. XII.—*Where and how the bread of the Sacrament is made, and of a Procession they made, and of the pomp with which the mass is said, and of entering into the church.*

782 The making of this sacramental bread is in this manner.
252 The building in which it is made, in all churches and
[346] monasteries, is, as I said above, on the gospel side, outside of the church and its circuit, which is like a cloister, in the space contained by the other outer circuit, which is not covered in, which space serves for a churchyard. All the churches and monasteries have such a building, and it does not contain anything else except what is requisite for this purpose; that is to say, a mortar for pounding wheat, a machine for making very clean flour, and such as is required for such a purpose, for they do not prepare this sacrament from flour or wheat on which women have laid their hands. They have pots for preparing the paste, which they make thicker than ours. They have a furnace, as for distilling water, and upon it a plate of iron, and in some churches of copper, and in other poor churches of clay. This plate is round and of a good size; they place fire underneath it, and when it is hot clean it with a waxed cloth, pour on it a portion of paste, and spread it out with a wooden spoon of such size as they intend to make the bread, and they make it very round. When it is set they take it off and place it on end, then they make another in the same way. When this second one is set, they take the first and place it upon it, that is to say, the side of the first which was uppermost they put upon the top of the other, fresh with fresh, and so the bread remains one whole one, and they do nothing more than make it round and turn it from one side to the other, and move it about on the plate, that it may bake on both sides and on the circumference. In this manner they make one or as many as they wish. In this same
[273] house are the raisins from which the wine is made, and a machine for pressing.

4: Alvarez M-5 (1520-1526) 1881
MP5 Amhara MP5

He said that no men died at the hands of justice, that they flogged many, and put out the eyes of some, and of others they cut off a foot or a hand, according to the quality the crime; but that he had seen a man burned because he was found to have committed two robberies in a church.

That the Pope or Patriarch of the country of Prester John is called Abima, which means father, and that there is nobody else in all the kingdoms and lordships of the Prester who confers orders except him.

The Prester John is called Acegue,[1] which means emperor, and he is called Neguz, which means king.

There is no manner of physic, only they apply fire; in some sickness they use cupping without fire, and for headaches, they bleed on the head with a knife placed on the vein, and they strike it with a stick so that it should draw blood, and also they take some herbs as a beverage to cure themselves.

In all the country there is no town which exceeds one thousand six hundred inhabitants, and of these there are few, and there are no walled towns or castles, but villages without number. The houses generally, or most of them, are round, and all of one story, covered with terraces or thatch, and courtyards round them. People generally sleep on ox-hides, others on beds made of straps of the same hides; no kind of table. They eat in flat trenchers, like trays of great width, without napkins or tablecloths. They have basins of very black earthenware like jet, and pipkins of the same clay for drinking water and wine. Many eat raw meat, and others eat it roasted on the ashes, others roasted over woodfire, and others over cowdung where there is no wood. There is much wax there, and tapers and candles; they do not make candles of tallow. There is no oil there except a kind which they call *hena*, and which is made from some herbs like Mayweed;[2] it has no taste, and is beautiful as gold. There

[1] *Alegue*, an Emperor. [2] *Pampilhos*, also called *olho de boy*.

8: Rey G-5 (1910-1920)1935
MP5 Amhara MP5

784 Christians will not touch meat unless it is killed by
795 one of themselves, nor will Moslems eat any which has been killed by a Christian. We had one Moslem with us when we were on trek, and as he would not eat the ox which my other men had killed he bought a whole sheep for himself, and killed and ate it himself; none of the other men would touch an atom of it, even when their own supply ran out and they had no meat at all.

262
252 Of course the comparatively high price of meat (for an Abyssinian) prevents the too frequent consumption of *broundo* amongst the people, and their tastes in every-day food are simple. Bread is their mainstay. This is found in many varieties; some of it soft, slightly sour in taste, and pale brown in colour; the most popular is of flour made from *teff* or millet seed, mixed to a thick paste with water and then poured into a large rough slightly concave iron receptacle and cooked over an open fire, without grease or fat of any kind. When finished this bread takes the form and aspect of large pancakes, twelve to eighteen inches in diameter, and is very good, especially when eaten with jam or butter; we always ate it ourselves when on trek. The native eats with it a kind of mash of lentils or dried peas, ground and cooked, and mixed with butter and a very hot red sauce which is produced from the chilli; this latter is very widely cultivated in several varieties all over the country.

263 The amount of pepper that is put into their cooked dishes is as a rule disastrous to the European palate at the first time of trying, and how they can swallow the fiery compounds that they do passes my comprehension —their tongues and palates must be made of leather.

Ali food, including meat, is eaten with the fingers amongst all classes, a piece of bread being broken off,

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

622 621 794 rounding a local church, and therefore "parish" may be the more appropriate term for it than village. The *chĭqā shum* and the local church authorities work closely on occasion, particularly in connection with the construction and maintenance of church buildings.

*565 79 182 The church represents the third main link between the peasant hamlet and the broader Abyssinian life. As the peasant depends on the local market to mediate between his production unit and the external economy, and on the *chĭqā shum* to mediate between his domestic polity and the higher political authorities, so he depends on the local clergy to mediate between his home culture and the "high culture" of Abyssinia as embodied in the institutions of the Orthodox Church.

The peasant supports the church by following its main ritual requirements and by contributing, according to his means, a certain quantity of grain each year. If the peasant works land owned by the church, a considerable part of his produce is transmitted automatically to individual priests, or gifts are offered to the church according to the occasion. In return, the church symbolizes for him the integrity of his moral order and provides moral support during personal crisis.

*565 Such, in broad outline, is the structural setting of peasant life among the Amhara.

THE WORLD OF ACTIVITY

*565 512 ### *The Daily Round*

Work begins in the peasant's home well before daybreak. His wife or maid-[462] servant rises with the first cockcrow to grind grain. It is pitch dark as she feels [252] her way across the earthen floor and begins to push and pull a large flat stone over little heaps of barley, wheat, or *tĕff*.

An hour or two later cold light seeps in through cracks in the door and, if it is in bad repair, the thatched roof. The noises of chickens and livestock [782] become more audible, and the rest of the household begins to stir. The man of the house starts his day by reciting a prayer or, if he has some education, [231] by reading a passage from some sacred text. Then he or one of the boys takes [462] the oxen and cows out for breakfast, to a pile of hay in the yard or a spot of pasture rich with grass. Donkeys, mules, and perhaps horses are also sent to graze.

[372] One of the women pokes the embers that spent the night under a blanket of ash. She blows them into flame through a bamboo pipe, filling the room [262] with smoke and her eyes with tears. Over the fire she sets a clay pot to warm [252] up leftover pepper sauce. The peasant sits on a sheepskin spread over the clay [352] bench that adjoins the wall. Water is poured from a gourd for him to wash [515] his hands, and *ĭnjarā* and sauce are brought for his breakfast. He eats by him-[264] self, slowly, pondering the work for the day.

11:Levine Z-4,5 (1958-1961)1965 MP5 Amhara MP5

At around ten years the Amhara girl leaves the shepherd's work once and for all and spends all her time about the house. She becomes increasingly useful with kitchen work—chopping onions, grinding pepper, baking *injarā*. Bit by bit she learns all the arts of the housewife, including how to make good *doro wat*, a hot chicken stew, the dish that really proves the mettle of an Amhara bride. By the age of twelve or thirteen she knows enough to manage a home by herself and is ripe for marriage, though her training is often capped by a period after marriage during which she works alongside her mother-in-law in the home of her husband's parents. Thus the Amhara social system sees to it that the adolescent girl, as well as the adolescent boy, is familiar with adult work responsibilities and prepared to shoulder them without much ado.

Toward Marital Roles

The transition to adult status in Amhara culture is related above all to the assumption of marital roles. The three events which more than anything else establish one as an adult are marriage, moving into one's own house, and begetting a child.

Preparation for the roles of spouse and parent is more or less continuous throughout childhood, so that nearly all Amhara enter marriage as a matter of course and at an early age. Strong identifications are formed through virtually constant association with the parent of the same sex during adolescence, and to a large extent throughout childhood. When they are not out tending the herds, girls are working around the house in the company of their mothers, and boys are off in the fields or going on trips with their fathers. This identification is strengthened by experimental play within children's groups as well. It has been observed that tiny boys and girls play "marriage" and "house" with considerable sophistication, even to the point of pretending to send a messenger to the bride's parents to announce that she had been proven a virgin.[5]

With regard to premarital preparation for adult sexual functions, however, a double standard does exist. Although public norms require boys to be virgin at marriage, and one hears it said that "in the old days" this norm was strictly enforced, premarital sexual experimentation for boys is regarded as a natural occurrence.* In practice, and according to the norms of the male adolescents themselves, boys are expected to have sexual experience before marriage so long as it is carried out quietly and with discretion. If a boy is still virgin by the end of his teens he may be referred to by one of his

* Indeed, one of the normal functions of maidservants in the well-to-do families has been to provide sexual initiation for adolescent boys.